THE WORLD.

NUMBER CXI.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *February* the 13th, 1755.

IT is very well known that religion and politics are perfectly underſtood by everybody, as they require neither ſtudy nor experience. All people therefore decide peremptorily, though often variouſly, upon both.

ALL ſects, ſeverally ſure of being in the right, intimate, at leaſt, if not denounce, damnation to thoſe that differ from them, in points ſo clear, ſo plain and ſo obvious. On the other hand, the infidel, not leſs an enthuſiaſt than any of them (though upon his own principles he cannot damn, becauſe he knows to demonſtration that there is no future ſtate) would very gladly hang, as hypocrites or fools, the whole body of believers.

IN

In politics, the ſects are as various and as warm: and what ſeems very extraordinary, is, that thoſe who have ſtudied them the moſt, and experienced them the longeſt, always know them the leaſt. Every adminiſtration is in the wrong, though they have the clue and ſecret of buneſs in their hands; and not leſs than ſix millions of their fellow-ſubjects (for I only except very young children) are willing and able to diſcover, cenſure, reform and correct their errors, and put them in the right way.

These conſiderations, among many others, determined me originally not to meddle with religion or politics, in which I could not inſtruct, and upon which I thought it not decent to trifle.

Entertainment alone muſt be the object of an humble weekly author of a ſheet and a half. A certain degree of bulk is abſolutely neceſſary for a certain degree of dignity, either in man or book. A ſyſtem of ethics, to be reſpected as it ought, requires at leaſt a quarto; and even moral eſſays cannot decently, and with utility, appear in leſs than a thick octavo. But ſhould I, in my ignoble ſtate of a fugitive ſheet and half, preſume with a grave face, to cenſure folly, or with an angry one, to laſh vice, the porter of every well-bred family in town, would have orders to deny me; and I ſhould forfeit my place at the breakfaſt-table, where now, to my great honour and emolument, I am pretty generally ſerved up. But if by the introduction of that wit and humour which I believe even my enemies muſt allow me, I can without offence to the politer part of my readers, ſlide in any uſeful moral, I will not neglect the opportunity; for I will be witty whenever I can, and inſtructive whenever I dare: and

when

when my ſcattered leaves ſhall, like the Sybil's, come to be collected, I believe, I may without vanity aſſert, that they will be, at leaſt, as good oracles.

But in this deſign too I am aware of difficulties, little inferior to thoſe which diſcouraged me from medling with religion and politics: for everybody has wit and humour, and many have more of both than they, or, at leaſt, their friends, know what to do with. As they are gifts of nature, not to be acquired by art, who is there that thinks himſelf ſo diſinherited by nature as not to have ſome ſhare of them? Nay, thoſe (if ſuch there are) who are modeſt enough to think themſelves cut off with a ſhilling, huſband that twelve-pence with care, and frugally ſpend their penny upon occaſion, as ſly wags, and dry jokers.

In this univerſal profuſion, this prodigious plenty of wit and humour, I cannot help diſtruſting a little the ſucceſs, though by no means the merit, of my own: for I have interior conviction that no man in England has ſo much. But taſtes are various, and the market is glutted. However, I ſhould hope, that my candid readers will have the ſame regard for My opinion, which they have for moſt of the opinions they entertain; that is, that they will take it upon truſt, eſpecially as they have it *from the gentleman's own mouth*.

The better to take my meaſures for the future, I have endeavoured to trace the progreſs and reception of my paper, through the ſeveral claſſes of it's readers.

In families of condition, it is firſt received by the porter, who, yawning, juſt caſts his half-open eyes upon it; for it comes out ſo early as between ten and eleven; but finding neither the politics nor the caſualties of the week in it, throws it aſide, and takes up in

it's

it's ſtead a daily news-paper, in which all thoſe matters are related with equal truth and perſpicuity.

From thence it is ſent up to Mrs. Betty, to lay upon the breakfaſt-table. She receives it in pretty much the ſame manner, finds it deficient in point of news, and lays it down in exchange for the Daily-Advertiſer, where ſhe turns with impatience to the advertiſements, to ſee what invitations are thrown out by ſingle gentlemen of undoubted characters, to agreeable young women of unblemiſhed reputations, to become either their wives or their companions. And by a prudent forecaſt, ſhe particularly attends to the premiums ſo frequently offered, for a fine wholeſome breaſt of milk.

When it is introduced into my lady's dreſſing-room, it undergoes a ſeverer examination: for if my lord and lady ever meet, it is then and there. The youngeſt, probably, of the young ladies is appointed to read it aloud, to uſe her to read at ſight. If my lord, who is a judge of wit, as well as of property in the laſt reſort, gives a favourable nod, and ſays, *it is well enough to day*; my lady, who does not care to contradict him in trifles, pronounces it to be *charming*. But if unfortunately my lord, with an an air of diſtaſte, calls it *poor ſtuff*; my lady diſcovers it to be *horribly ſtupid*. The young family are unanimouſly of opinion, that the name of Adam Fitz-Adam is a very comical one, and enquire into the meaning of the globe in the frontiſpeice; by which (if any body could tell them) they might get a pretty notion of geography.

In families of an inferior claſs, I meet with a fuller, though perhaps not a more favourable trial. My merits and demerits are freely diſcuſſed: ſome think me too grave, others too trifling. The miſtreſs of the houſe, though

though ſhe deteſts ſcandal, wiſhes, for example's ſake only, that I would draw the characters, and expoſe the intrigues of the fine folks. The maſter wonders that I do not give the miniſters a rap; and concludes that I receive huſh-money. But all agree in ſaying facetiouſly and pleaſantly enough, that the WORLD does not inform them how the WORLD goes. This is followed by many other *bons mots* equally ingenious, alluding to the title of my paper, and worth at leaſt the two-pence a week that it coſts.

IN the city (for my paper has made it's way to that end of the town, upon the ſuppoſition of it's being a faſhionable one at this) I am received and conſidered in a different light. All my general reflections upon the vices or the follies of the age are, by the ladies, ſuppoſed to be levelled at particular perſons, or at leaſt diſcovered to be very applicable to ſuch and ſuch of the QUALITY. They are alſo thought to be *very pat* to ſeveral of their own neighbours and acquaintance; and ſhrewd hints of that kind greatly embelliſh the converſation of the evening. The graver and more frugal part of that opulent metropolis, who do not themſelves buy, but borrow my paper of thoſe who do, complain that, though there is generally room ſufficient at the end of the laſt page, I never inſert the prices of ſtocks nor of goods at Bear-key. And they are every one of them aſtoniſhed how certain tranſactions of the court of aldermen on one hand, and of the common-council on the other, can poſſibly eſcape my animadverſion, ſince it is impoſſible that they can have eſcaped my knowledge.

SUCH are the cenſures and difficulties to which a poor weekly author is expoſed. However I have the pleaſure, and ſomething more than the pleaſure, of finding that

two